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PREVENTION OF AN ARMS RACE IN OUTER SPACE

Letter dated 31 August 1993 from the Permanent Representative of the United States of America to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to transmit to you the attached paper concerning confidence-building measures in outer space. In July 1993, at the final meeting of the Group of Governmental Experts to carry out a study on the application of confidence-building measures in outer space, the expert from the United States indicated that, while not blocking consensus on the study and allowing the text to go forward in its final form, he had additional comments and reservations from the Government of the United States of America regarding the study.

These comments and reservations are contained in the annex. I should like to request that the present letter and the annex be circulated as a document of the General Assembly under agenda item 70.

(Signed) Madeleine K. ALBRIGHT

ANNEX

Views of the Government of the United States of America on the United Nations Study on the Application of Confidence-Building Measures in Outer Space carried out by a group of governmental experts

In July 1993, at the final meeting of the Group of Governmental Experts to carry out a study on the application of confidence-building measures in outer space, in response to General Assembly resolution 45/55 B of 4 December 1990, the expert from the United States indicated that, while not blocking consensus on the study, the Government of the United States of America had certain reservations that would be transmitted to the Secretary-General. In that regard, the following additional comments and reservations regarding the study are provided by the United States:

(a) The United States is not opposed in principle to confidence-building measures in outer space;

(b) Indeed, the United States is actively engaged even now in space activities that promote international understanding and cooperation;

(c) The United States believes the use of space for national security purposes is neither inherently destabilizing nor necessarily increases tensions among States. In fact, in many cases such use can improve stability and lessen tensions among States;

(d) The United States believes that there is a continuing need to restrain proliferation of sensitive technology in accordance with existing non-proliferation regimes as States move to expand cooperation in space activities;

(e) The United States believes that the existing legal regimes for outer space activities are adequate and that no changes are needed at this time;

(f) There are existing bilateral and multilateral forums discussing cooperative efforts in outer space and space technology. Should negotiations on further cooperative efforts in outer space, including confidence-building measures prove necessary, the appropriate forum for such negotiations and the scope of those negotiations should be determined at that time and by the nations involved in those cooperative efforts.